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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DIVISION OF HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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BUREAU OF MEMORANDUM TO:
HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Department of Transportation

FROM: Alice H. Guerrant
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DATE: March 29, 1984

SUBJECT: Research Design for Highways

I have read through Sue's research design again very carefully, and despite some criticisms about its applicability which I know it received, I feel it is a very good starting point for organizing the approach to DELDOT's far-flung projects. The discussion of the applicability of Hudson's model should be expanded, to demonstrate that the differences between the Plains environment and the Mid-Atlantic Coast environment are realized and taken into consideration (as is in fact done in the Geography Section). In addition, the expected effects of this model need to be discussed in the application section. As it is, no explanation is offered to show how Hudson's developmental model relates to the hierarchical definitions of settlement types and transportation routes. Where, in other words, do the properties listed here fit in Hudson's scheme, and what data is needed to test this?

My main comment about this paper is that it does not go far enough; it is only the first step. For this research design to be truly useful to Highways, the historic context of the region has to be explicated as well, and the important research issues for each period and for the major resource types have to be presented in light of this research design. The model needs to be placed in a real-world situation in order to generate specific, testable hypotheses in relation to specific resources. Without an historic context, it is impossible to judge whether the information contained within a site is important to the research design. The Rt. 13 study has shown that a general historic context for a large area can be generated without doing intensive documentary research.

I also have a few minor comments. In the route ranking scheme, there is no place given for local river traffic, up and down along Indian River, for example; river in this scheme seems to refer exclusively to the Delaware.

Wilmington was never a Frontier Town, in Kenneth Lewis' definition of the term. Christinham was, but cannot be considered relevant to Wilmington's settlement and development.

The question of where to put isolated schools in the definition of settlement types could probably be resolved by adding Rural Community, defined as a dispersed settlement of isolated homesteads and specialized support facilities, such as schools, mills, churches, blacksmith shops and so on, connected by local transportation networks within a small geographic area and possessing ethnic and socio-economic characteristics in common.

I hope this has been of some help. Let me know if you have any questions on these comments.